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# THE GULL

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 89

NO. 4

APRIL 2004

FOUNDED 1917

## Comments Needed on Alameda County Watershed

**G**olden Gate Audubon is taking part in a public process designed to improve ecological management of 36,000 acres of land in Alameda County, and we need your help! The land is owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), and the process is called a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

The SFPUC, which delivers water to millions of Bay Area residents, owns the vast acreage in Alameda County that stretches from Pleasanton south to Mount Hamilton. A portion of the land, leased to the East Bay Regional Park District, makes up part of the Sunol Regional Wilderness. The entire watershed, with its rich habitats and wildlife diversity, is an important resource for the entire Bay Area. More than half of the watershed consists of grasslands, and more than a fifth is covered by woodlands. These valuable habitats, along with open water, freshwater marshes, and streams, support a wide range of resident and migratory wildlife.

Golden Eagles, Bald Eagles, Prairie Falcons, Ferruginous Hawks, Burrowing Owls, Short-eared Owls, Willow Flycatchers, California Black Rails, California Horned Larks, Loggerhead Shrikes, and Tri-colored Blackbirds are just some of the many avian species that have been identified on watershed land. Listed nonavian species include the federally threatened California Red-Legged Frog and Alameda Whipsnake, as well as Rainbow Trout, and Steelhead, as well as numerous plant species. Some of these listed species are rapidly disappearing from other parts of the Bay Area.

The SFPUC does not intend to develop watershed lands. But it does construct and repair roads, bridges, and pipelines—projects that can impact both land and wildlife. Ongoing operations, such as discharging water from reservoirs into Alameda Creek and other streams, especially at Calaveras Dam, affect aquatic species.



Bald Eagle

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

WATERSHED, continued on page 12

## Help Reduce Bird Kill at Altamont Pass

**G**olden Gate Audubon joined with the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) and Californians for Renewable Energy (CARE) in February to appeal the County of Alameda's approval of 15 permits for wind turbines operating at Altamont Pass.

The Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area lies along a major raptor migratory corridor. Each year, its wind turbines kill 60 or more Golden Eagles, as well as hundreds of hawks, burrowing owls and other protected raptors. The Altamont pass wind turbines cause more bird deaths than any wind facility in the world—with significant impacts on both local and regional bird populations. But despite some 15 years of data on bird mortality at the site, neither the County nor the wind turbine operators have taken any meaningful action to reduce bird mortality.

The County's decision to issue new, 20-year use permits at Altamont Pass promises to continue this terrible impact on Bay Area raptors and other birds. Golden Gate Audubon, CARE and CBD filed an appeal with Alameda County Board of Supervisors, arguing that the permits were granted illegally: the County failed to assess the impact of the turbines through environmental review and failed to require the power companies to reduce mortality or mitigate for bird kill. In addition, by granting 20-year permits, the County has effectively granted the power companies permission to continue their illegal activities.

We are asking the County to conduct a full

BIRD KILL, continued on page 12

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## ROSTER

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**Second Vice President:** Carolyn Kolka '04  
**Recording Secretary:** Pat Gannon '04  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Carolyn Kolka '04  
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### East Bay Directors:

Leora Feeney '04, John Luther '05

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**FAWR:** Leora Feeney 510.522.8525

**Field Trips:** Susan Groves\* 510.654.5954

**Finance:** Kevin Consey\*

**Latin America:** Bob Risebrough\* 510.549.2476

**Major Gifts:** Allan Ridley 415.566.3241

**Membership:** Autumn Garrett\*

**Nominating:** Nancy Smith

**Program:** Anne McTavish\*

**Publications/Publicity:** Marjorie Blackwell\*

\*Board of Directors '04

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRD BOX**  
**415.681.7422**

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society membership is \$20 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. Monthly meeting: second Friday in the West Bay; third Thursday in the East Bay, 7 p.m.

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# Celebrating the Faces of Golden Gate Audubon

For those who haven't visited or contacted the Golden Gate Audubon office recently, I am pleased to introduce our new office administrator, Janette Gross, who joined the Golden Gate Audubon staff in February. Janette brings a suite of talents to our organization, including more than 30 years of experience in human resources and financial management. Her professional accomplishments include working in administration and human resources at Bechtel Corporation in San Francisco, where she was instrumental in the company's initial programs to recruit female engineers and reach out to minorities and the disabled, and serving as Director of Finance and Administration at ELS Architects in Berkeley. Janette has a degree in sociology from Drew University—and she is an enthusiastic birder to boot!

Kathryn Blake, our indefatigable administrative assistant for over four years, is now serving as Golden Gate Audubon's database manager and bookkeeper—still providing us the benefit of her technical expertise and sharing her passion for birds.

In January, more than 70 Golden Gate Audubon volunteers had a chance to honor Kathryn for all her work for Golden Gate Audubon and to meet and greet each other. The occasion was a special party to recognize all Golden Gate Audubon volunteers, hosted by Board member Jacqui Smalley and her husband, John Austin, in their lovely home. At this lively event, volunteers, Board members, staff and friends of Golden Gate Audubon reconnected with old acquaintances and met new ones, watched a video of *Winged Migration* and won raffle prizes.

This month, the Golden Gate Audubon Board will tackle a process of strategic planning, looking carefully at how our organization can expand its role in Bay Area wildlife conservation and education and serving our members. We welcome your input; please do not hesitate to contact me with your comments and suggestions.

by Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director

## New Board to Be Elected in May

The 2004 annual election for the Golden Gate Audubon Board of Directors will be held by written ballots due on May 13, 2004. A ballot form with a proposed slate of directors and instructions for voting are printed on page 11. Please vote!

The election follows the revised Bylaws approved by the Board last November and by Golden Gate Audubon members in January. The new Bylaws provide for a variable number of Directors, with the exact number to be fixed by the Board from time to time. In January, the Board authorized a total of 17 Directors: 9 elected by the members, and 8 designated by the Elected Directors. (The current Board consists of 16 members, including 9 elected by the members.)

Three of the current Elected Directors are serving terms that expire in 2005 or 2006. This means there are six "Elected Director" positions open this year. All Elected Directors will eventually serve for three years. However, the Board has opted to "phase in" the 3-year terms of the new Directors. This year, some will be elected for less than full terms, so that three positions will come open each year hereafter (if the authorized number continues to be nine).

In addition, the Board has decided not to label some members as "East Bay" or "West Bay" Directors (the custom in prior years), since all Directors are elected by and represent Golden Gate Audubon membership as a whole. At the same time, the Nominating Committee will continue to propose candidates from both sides of the Bay.

After the election in May, the Elected Directors will designate 8 additional Directors to serve on the Board for one year. The full Board will then appoint the Golden Gate Audubon officers (President, Secretary and Treasurer) from among the Directors.

# Upcoming Events

## Volunteers Needed at Audubon Canyon Ranch

Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) is seeking Golden Gate Audubon volunteers to serve as hosts at the Bolinas Preserve in Marin County on specific weekends from April to early July. The ACR is a unique nursery for Great Blue Herons and Egrets overlooking Bolinas Lagoon. Every year from mid-March to mid-July, the Preserve is open to visitors on weekends. Thousands come to view the birds nesting in the tops of redwood trees and to enjoy miles of beautiful trails.

Volunteers are needed to greet visitors, answer questions and help them enjoy their experience. This year, Golden Gate Audubon will be hosting on the following dates: April 10, April 11 (Easter), May 15, May 16, May 23, June 12, June 13, July 3, and July 4. To sign up, call ACR-Host Volunteer Coordinator Bill Herring at 415.863.3625. You will be sent information from ACR to answer visitors' questions.

ACR is a conservation organization that operates three sanctuaries in the North Bay: two in Marin and one in Sonoma County. The ACR began in response to a plan to develop a new residential community in Bolinas Lagoon. Golden Gate, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies joined with local groups to defeat the proposal. Following the successful outcome, the ACR Bolinas Preserve heron and egret rookery was purchased with the help of the participating Audubon Societies. For a brief period, Golden Gate Audubon actually owned the Bolinas Preserve before it was transferred to ACR. Our organization now serves on the ACR Board.

## Mother's Day BBQ Helps Audubon Canyon Ranch

The Marin Audubon Society's 49<sup>th</sup> annual Mother's Day BBQ will be held Sunday, May 9, at Volunteer Canyon, 3 miles north of Stinson Beach on Highway 1. Gates open at 11 a.m., and food is served from noon to 2 p.m. The cost is \$18 per adult and \$10 per child. Reservations are required. Call 416.454.5469 for information.

Proceeds go to support field trips that bring thousands of Bay Area schoolchildren to Audubon Canyon Ranch every year, as well as to support Marin Audubon's free monthly programs and field trips.

Enjoy dining on delicious food in a beautiful area normally closed to the public, and taking nature hikes around the meadow to view nesting herons and egrets.

## Come Celebrate the Alameda Wildlife Refuge

Golden Gate Audubon will host its annual Family Day at Alameda Wildlife Refuge on Sunday, March 28, from noon to 4 p.m. Family Day is a celebration of the refuge and the rare birds and wildlife that call this urban refuge home.

This year, we will focus on honoring students from Alameda schools who participated in a habitat enhancement event for the endangered California Least Tern in early March. Working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists and Golden Gate Audubon volunteers, the students spread gravel and oyster-shell substrate at the tern nesting site to improve their habitat and to support tern reproduction at the refuge. The Alameda Refuge terns represent the northernmost nesting population of this endangered species.

Family Day activities for kids of all ages will include van tours of the refuge, musical performances, games, story telling, and awards to children participating in enhancing Least Tern habitat.

## Audubon Member's Garden Showcased in Garden Tour

The beautiful Oakland garden of Golden Gate Audubon board member Jacqui Smalley will be open to the public on Saturday, May 15, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., as part of the Garden Conservancy's 2004 Open Days Program.

The Garden Conservancy is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving America's gardens. Its Open Days Program allows the public to visit rarely seen, private gardens selected as the best in the country. Half of each \$5.00-per-garden admission fee is donated by the Garden Conservancy to organizations of the garden owner's choice; John Austin and Jacqui Smalley have designated Golden Gate Audubon to receive proceeds from their garden.

The Austin/Smalley garden is located at 5920 Ross Street in Oakland's Rockridge district. This award-winning, half-acre garden complements a fine 1905 Arts-and-Crafts-era house. The design, by British landscape architect Tim Clarke



The garden of Golden Gate Audubon member Jacqui Smalley.

Jacqui Smalley

and Berkeley plant designer Kirsten Berg, includes water features and garden structures in keeping with the architecture of the house. Terraces with steps and retaining walls of brick and stone are reminiscent of English and French gardens. The mature planting is rich and variable. Heirloom roses provide a central theme, both within the rose garden and combined with other plants. The garden also provides habitat to numerous birds.

No reservations are required to visit the Open Day gardens, and events are rain or shine. For information, visit the website [www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org).

## Spring 2004 Bird Seed Sale

Friday and Saturday, April 23rd and 24th

Here's your chance to pick up quality Volkman seed at the Golden Gate Audubon office outside normal business hours. Just fill out the adjacent Seed Order form and mail it with your check or credit card information by Wednesday, April 14th. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope so your order confirmation can be mailed back to you. You may also call the office at 510.843.2222 with your order and credit card information.

When you fill out the order form, please take advantage of the 10% Supporting Member discount. If you are not a Supporting Member, you can sign up by entering the \$25 dues in the "Sign me up" line near the bottom of the form.

Most of our native birds favor either sunflower seeds (chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, white-crowned sparrow, purple and house finch) or Nyjer seed (goldfinch, pine siskins and chickadees). If you have any questions about which kind of seed to buy, give us a call.

We will have plenty of extra seed on hand during the sale, so come down to the office even if you did not place an order. While you are at the office, check out our collection of standard field guides, CD-ROMs, bird song CD's, and new books such as:

- *A Guide to the Nests, Eggs and Nestlings of North American Birds*—\$32.50
- *Peterson's Advanced Birding*—\$19.50
- *Sibley's Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*—\$21.50
- *Sibley's Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*—\$21.50
- Various children's coloring books and beginning guide books—\$3.25 to \$9.75

NEW! We also have a selection of little Audubon Plush Birds with bird calls provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for \$6.75 each.

Note: This sale is for Golden Gate Audubon Supporting and National Audubon members only. Prices include sales tax.

### GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SPRING BIRD SEED ORDER FORM

Order and Prepay by: Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>

Pick up at the GGAS office: Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 3 – 6 p.m., Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

SEED		Price	Qty	Amount
GGAS' Own Mix <i>Contains red and white millet and black oil sunflower seed</i>	20#	\$ 14.25		
	40#	\$ 27.50		
Volkman Premium <i>Contains red and white millet, plus 2% corn and wheat</i>	20#	\$ 13.50		
	40#	\$ 26.00		
Black Oil Sunflower Seed	25#	\$ 11.25		
	50#	\$ 20.50		
Black Oil Sunflower Chips <i>No hulls, no mess</i>	25#	\$ 24.00		
Nyjer (Thistle) Seed	5#	\$ 7.00		
	20#	\$ 27.25		
Suet Cake (Hearty) 11.75 oz.		\$ 2.50		
Suet Cake (Nut & Berry) 11.75 oz.		\$ 2.50		

FEEDERS		Price	Qty	Amount
Duncraft Seed Tube Feeder 16"		\$ 30.00		
Squirrel-Proof Tube Feeder		\$ 59.50		
New Sunflower Seed Feeder Squirrel Blocker		\$ 32.50		
Thistle Stocking		\$ 3.25		
Hummingbird 6 oz. no drip/ant moat feeder		\$ 18.25		
Ketchum Suet Cage		\$ 6.00		
Suet Cage Squirrel Proof		\$ 21.50		

**SUB-TOTAL** (tax incl. in price)

**Less GGAS Supporting member 10% Discount**  
(Sign up on line below)

**TOTAL less 10% Discount**

Sign me up as a Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Member—Dues \$25

**Donation to Golden Gate Audubon**

**TOTAL PAYMENT**

Mail with **payment** and **self-addressed, stamped envelope** to:

GGAS, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702

Check Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# PROGRAMS

Anne McTavish



## East Bay Breeding Land Birds Class

Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. We meet socially at 7 p.m. For more information about upcoming events, detailed directions or updates, please see our web page.

[www.goldengateaudubon.org/Chapter/programs2003-2004.htm](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/Chapter/programs2003-2004.htm)

### Birds of Arizona

*San Francisco*

**Friday, April 9**

Bob Stewart

With its abundant and diverse wildlife and spectacular scenery, southeastern Arizona is a premier destination for birders and other nature enthusiasts. The combination of mild climate and diverse habitats, including 9000-foot mountains and the last free-flowing river in the Southwest, make southeastern Arizona a major hotspot for many rare and unusual animals and plants.

Bob Stewart has been a teaching naturalist for 40 years, and is the author of two butterfly books. He promises colorful stories and beautiful pictures!

County Fair building, Strybing Arboretum,

Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way

Directions: [www.strybing.org/visiting/page2.html](http://www.strybing.org/visiting/page2.html)

### An Exploration of Chile's Birds

*Berkeley*

**Thursday, April 15**

Alvaro Jaramillo

This program will explore Chile from the northern desert to the temperate forests,

south to Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. The birding in Chile includes some of the most incredible pelagic birding (five species of albatross) anywhere in the world. Chile is blessed with a cold and very productive ocean. The diversity of the birdlife can be exemplified by the Slender-billed and Austral Parakeets high in the cold, and sometimes snowy, forests of the Andes, to the wonderful diversity of tapaculos, an assortment of three species of flamingos in the northern highlands, to the much sought after Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, and Magellanic Plovers of the far south. Join us for an exploration of Chile, a discovery of how geography has shaped the unique avifauna of the region, and to compare to the California birdlife, which shares a similar ecology to Chile.

Alvaro received his undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Toronto. He is the author of two books and works as a birding tour guide for Field Guides, Inc.

Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda  
(between Solano and Marin)

Directions: [www.northbrae.org/directions.html](http://www.northbrae.org/directions.html)

This spring, Golden Gate Audubon will offer a two-week course to introduce beginning birders to some of our common East Bay breeding land birds. The class will emphasize field identification, building birding skills, and the pure joy of watching birds. We will also touch upon birding ethics, reference materials, and natural history. Questions about birding optics and resources will be addressed individually.

Classroom instruction will be Wednesdays, May 12 and 19, from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Golden Gate Audubon office, 2530 Golden Gate Ave., Suite G. Morning field trips are on Saturdays, May 15 and 22. The cost is \$20 for the public, or \$18 for Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Members.

The classroom instructor will be Golden Gate Audubon member Lillian Fujii. Field trips will be co-led by Lillian and Steve Hayashi.

To register, send a check, payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society, to the address above. Unless the information is on your check, please provide your phone number and e-mail address. Questions? Call the office at 510.843.2222 or Lillian Fujii at 510.236.4167.

## Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education and member activities!

### Golden Eagle (\$1000 or more)

Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge (*Alameda Education Program*)

### Peregrine Falcon (\$500 to \$999)

Carol Baxter (*FAWR & Operations*), Mara Melandry, Albert & Barbara Peters, Mary Schaefer, Arlene H. Sullivan\*

### Least Tern (\$200 to \$499)

Eleanor Briccetti (*stock*)

### Clapper Rail (\$100 to \$199)

Laura Baker\*, Stephen Bertrand, Bob Bishop\*, Terry & Zeo Coddington, Bridget Flanagan\*, Caroline Kim

& Bruce DeBenedictis\*, Dr. John & Mrs. Patricia Langdell\*

### Gifts (to \$99)

Clara Arakaki, Barbara Armstrong\*, Stefanie Arthur\*, Susan Barnes, Michael Butler\*, Ken Cardwell\*, Ed Cullen\*, Sheila Dickie\*, Judith Dunham\*, Carolyn Erickson\*, Lillian Fujii & Steve Hayashi\*, Albert Hopkins Jr. (*Quail*), Rudolf Glauser, Roberta Guise\*, Jane Haldane\*, Marshall Hasbrouck (*Latin America Comm.*), Jan Hintermeister\*, John Hulihan, Virginia Hunnicutt\*, Anthony H. Jackson\*, Roger James\*, Elizabeth Land\*, Joyce M. Larrick\* (*FAWR*), Donald Leonard, K.L. Lyde, Gloria Markowitz\*, Mignonet Montez, Ronald Morrison, Karen Naifeh PhD\*, Cordelia Neal\*, Lavinia Oppenheim\*, Roland Quillet\*, Steven Rosenberg\*, Don M. Sanford\*, Marilyn Schmitz\*, Lewis Segall & Molly Dinneen, Peter Seubert\*, Franz Snyder\*, Charles & Muriel Sonne, John Sproul, Richard Stookey\*, Anne Sussman\*,

Catherine Vancik\*, Colleen N. Vetter, Herta Weinstein\*, Joan Wilson\*, Victor & Brenda Wong\*

### In memory of

Cindy J. Bossi: John, Norma & Steve Bossi, Berniece Moore & Vicki Gwartney, Mary Jane Mann, Karen Rosenbaum

Charles ("Whitey") & Mary Louise Rosegay:

Dr. & Mrs. Craig Yorke

Charles ("Whitey") Rosegay: Joe & Pat Ishizaki

### In-Kind

Audubon Cellars, Inc., Mr Dieter Tede: Wine for volunteer appreciation event

### Grants

The Clorox Company Foundation Fund: MLK Jr. Education Program

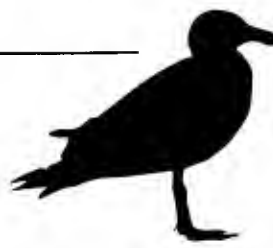
California Coastal Commission: MLK Jr. Education Program

\* With GGAS Supporting Membership



# FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



From Hwy. 92 in Foster City, take Mariner's Island Blvd. Exit (between Hwy. 101 and the San Mateo bridge) and go north until road ends at a light at 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.; continue across the street into the parking lot. Note: the Millbrae BART station is about 6 mi. north along the Bay Trail, Bayshore Hwy. and Millbrae Blvd.



## Bear Creek Staging Area

*Contra Costa County*

**Saturday, April 3**

Leader: Bob Lewis

510.845.5001, Rlewis0727@aol.com

Meet at 8 a.m. We'll look for Raptors, Western Bluebirds, warblers, etc.

Exit Hwy. 24 at Orinda, and drive toward Richmond. Follow Camino Pablo/San Pablo Dam Road to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right at the light, and continue several miles, crossing the intersection for Happy Valley Road. Immediately after crossing a creek, turn left into the parking lot. This turnoff is just before the entrance to Briones Regional Park (on the right).



## Drop-In Birding for Children

*Strybing Arboretum, San Francisco*

**Saturday, April 3**

San Francisco Nature Education Leaders:

Nancy DeStefanis, Angie Geiger;

Strybing Arboretum Docent: Darin Dawson

415.387.9160 or info@sfnature.org

Meet at the Main Gate near the Strybing Bookstore at 10 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them and a pencil. This free birding tour and nature hike for children tromps through the exciting microhabitats of the arboretum. Ages 7 and up. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Trip ends at noon.

*Co-sponsored by San Francisco Nature Education, Strybing Arboretum Society and Golden Gate Audubon Society.*

## Strybing Arboretum

*San Francisco*

**Sundays, April 4 and May 2**

GGAS co-leaders: Allan Ridley, Rick Ferrick; Strybing Arboretum Docents: Linda Lyons, Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the arboretum for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. See January *Gull* for details. Beginners and all others welcome.

## Tennessee Cove, Golden Gate National Recreation Area

*Marin County*

**Sunday, April 4**

Leader: Bob Hogan

415.258.0811, bobhogan@fastermac.net

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the trailhead for this half-day trip. This approximately 3-mile, round trip walk will take us through lush riparian habitat. We hope to see nesting hawks and other breeding birds, including Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's and possibly MacGillivray's Warbler. Lunch optional. Beginners welcome.

From San Francisco, take Hwy. 101 north to Marin County. Exit on Hwy. 1 toward Mill Valley and Stinson Beach. After about 1/4 mile, turn left onto Tennessee Valley Road; continue to the end of the road.



## Bike and Bird in Foster City and Redwood Shores

*San Mateo County*

**Sunday, April 4**

Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233

(no calls after 9 pm), kathy\_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the parking lot of Mariner's Point Golf Course in Foster City. The trip is a flat 20-mile loop on the Bay Trail and other bike paths, mostly paved. This circuit should find winter visitors and other shore and water birds on the bay, on lagoons, lakes, and sewer ponds. Trip continues to mid or late afternoon. Bicycle helmet required. Dress in layers, and bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels.

## Bay Trail Bicycle Trip

*El Cerrito/Albany*

**Friday, April 9**

Leader: Jeffrey Black, 510.526.7068

Meet at 3 p.m. for this Friday afternoon special at the Albany "bulb" parking lot reached via the Buchanan Avenue entrance (North) to Golden Gate Fields. We will bike to the Richmond marina looking for birds in breeding plumage. Rain cancels.



## Bay Trail/Richmond Service Trip

*Contra Costa County*

**Saturday, April 10**

Leader: Jeffrey Black

510.526.7068, chipmunk1003@aol.com

Call to reserve. 20 spaces available.

Build a marsh for the birds! Do you know which plants are needed to regrow a habitat? Help out in the new native plant nursery, transplanting seedlings and other tasks, and learn about the marsh restoration project underway along the south Richmond shoreline. We'll end the morning with a walk out to the Bay Trail to view shorebirds. This event is co-sponsored by Aquatic Outreach Institute, an environmental education non-profit organization based on the University of California's Richmond Field Station. Light refreshments will be provided; some gloves and tools are available, but you may bring your own. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at 9 a.m. at the UCB Richmond Field Station,



Contact Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair, at 510.654.5954 or susangroves@att.net:

- if you can share a ride or if you need a ride,
- if you have difficulty reaching a leader and need information,
- if you have suggestions for trips, or
- if you are interested in leading a trip.

## key



**Carpool**



**Entrance fee required**



**Biking trip**

1327 South 46<sup>th</sup> Street, Gate #2.

From Berkeley, take Hwy 580 towards Richmond and exit at Bayview Avenue. Turn left at the signal and go over the highway. At the stop sign, go straight. Follow the road about 1/4 mile, past the curve. Turn left at 47<sup>th</sup> St. (there is a left turn lane). Take an immediate right across the railroad tracks, into the Richmond Field Station. (47<sup>th</sup> St. is poorly marked. Look for the end of the iron fence on your left. If you reach the freeway entrance, you've gone too far.) The main gate will be closed, so turn left and follow the dirt road to gate #2. Once on the Field Station, turn right, then immediately another right. The plant nursery will be in front of you, just past the bend in the road.



## Pinnacles National Monument

*San Benito County*

**Saturday, April 17 and/or Sunday, April 18**

Leaders: Bob Risebrough and Hans Peeters;  
510.549.2476, pelecanus@igc.org

Spring migrants, spring wildflowers and a high probability of seeing the re-introduced California condors. On Saturday we will look for spring migrants, enjoy the wildflowers, and study the natural history of the Monument with Hans Peeters. On Sunday the focus will be on the condors, with a discussion of the reintroduction program and its future. Come for either or both days.

Saturday's trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up. Some might wish to participate in a field trip of the California Native Plants Society on Saturday, from the west side (information available from Bob). Sunday will be a one-day trip from the Bay Area. Maps may be downloaded from the Monument's website ([www.nps.gov/pinn](http://www.nps.gov/pinn)). Lodging is available in Hollister; leaders will stay in the private campground next to the east entrance. See [www.pinncamp.com](http://www.pinncamp.com) for more information. Bring lunch and liquids.

On Saturday we meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot at the eastern entrance to the Monument. On Sunday we meet at 9 a.m. From the Bay Area allow a full 2.5 hours of driving. Take Route 25 off 101 to Hollister and continue south on Route 25. There is no road through the Monument from the west side. Annual pass fee is \$15. Vehicle entrance fee for 7 days is \$5.



## Point Reyes National Seashore 17<sup>th</sup> Annual All-Day Birding Blitz

*Marin County*

**Saturday, April 17**

Leaders: Leon Abrams, 510.843.4107(h),  
[leonabrams@earthlink.net](mailto:leonabrams@earthlink.net);  
Cathy Purchis, [Catpur@value.net](mailto:Catpur@value.net)

This fast paced, multi-habitat, noncompetitive trip covers the Five Brooks Pond area, Limantour Spit, Drakes Bay, Fish Docks and parts of Pt. Reyes, ending at Bear Valley, producing approximately 100 species. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Five Brooks Trailhead parking lot, approximately 3.5 miles south of Olema on the west side of Hwy. 1. Bring water and food. Wear layered clothing for variable weather.

*This is a joint activity of Golden Gate  
Audubon and National Park Service*



## Monterey Seabirds Pelagic Trips

*Monterey County*

**Sundays, April 18, May 9, June 13, July 11**

All day trips (7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.) are offered by Monterey Seabirds with a \$10 discount for Golden Gate Audubon members. A Sea of Cortez Seabird & Cetacean Expedition (also discounted for members) is offered April 18–25. For information, visit [www.montercyseabirds.com](http://www.montercyseabirds.com).

## Wednesday At Arrowhead Marsh

*Alameda County*

**Wednesday, April 21**

Leader: Courtenay Peddle, 510.532.8911  
(no calls before 9am), [capeddle@there.net](mailto:capeddle@there.net)

Meet at the Arrowhead Marsh parking lot at 9:30 a.m. to study and enjoy the wintering birds. Up to 14 species of ducks, and possibility of Clapper rails. Shorebirds will be getting their breeding plumage. Heavy rain cancels.

Take I-880 south to Hegenberger and then west on Hegenberger to Doolittle Drive. Right on Doolittle, right onto Swan Way. Left into MLK park. Drive to end for Arrowhead Marsh parking lot. Bring scope if you have one. All levels of birders welcome.

## Mines Road

*Livermore Area*

**Saturday, April 24**

Leader: George Bing, 925.443.5868

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of the

former Nob Hill Shopping Center. We can expect to see Bullock's Oriole, Lewis' Woodpecker, Lawrence's Goldfinch and Phainopepla in this habitat. Bring food and liquids. Group may continue until dark.

Take I-580 east and turn right on No. Livermore Exit. Continue south two miles to the Nob Hill Shopping Center at So. Livermore and Pacific in Livermore. From there, we will caravan on mountain roads to I-5. Because of very limited parking along roads, carpooling is strongly recommended.



## Sudden Oak Death Syndrome Field Instruction

*Muir Woods National Monument,*

*Marin County*

**Saturday, April 24**

Coordinator: Rusty Scalf  
510.666.9936, [rscafe@jps.net](mailto:rscafe@jps.net)

What is the natural history of this new disease? What is the effect on the different species of native oaks? How can one accurately diagnose this disease and not be confounded by the several other diseases of oaks? How can incidents of SOD be reported on-line to a geographic database at UC Berkeley? Join UC Berkeley plant pathologists, Drs. Matteo Garbelotto, Wolfgang Schweigkofler, Eva Poinar and GIS specialist Ken-ichi Ueda for a day of education on this subject. GGAS field trip leader Rusty Scalf will be there and birds will not be ignored!

Meet at the Muir Woods Visitor's Center at 10 AM. Muir Woods National Monument is off Hwy 1 inland from Muir Beach in Marin County. See <http://www.visitmuirwoods.com/>



## Pt. Reyes National Seashore

*Marin County*

**Sunday, April 25**

Leader: Bob Power  
510.482.9601, [rcpower@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rcpower@sbcglobal.net)

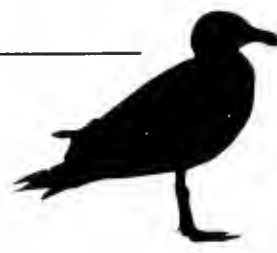
Warblers, whales and wildflowers. We will visit various habitats at the National Seashore starting at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse and back to Bear Valley. Along with incoming summer residents and migrating passerines, we'll keep a lookout for migrating Pacific Gray whales and the an-

FIELD TRIPS, continued on page 9

# OBSERVATIONS

February 1–29, 2004

Bruce Mast



**I**t was a quiet month. From the low volume of hotline reports and emails, it appears that birders were staying inside in droves. Only two birds on the CBRC review list turned up in the Bay Area. Nevertheless, those who ventured afield found a few gems to report.

## Loons to Ducks

We begin this month's installment with a tantalizing sighting from Bodega Bay, SON, where a possible Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*) was seen from Doran Park Rd on Feb 9th (Denise DH). Two days earlier, a birding driver (or driving birder) noticed a small flock (10-15) of Plegadis Ibises, probably White-faced, while crossing the Richmond Bay Bridge in MRN (EK). Brants are regular at Bodega Bay but a single bird at Pillar Point Harbor, SM, on Feb 8th was a rare treat (HH). On Feb 26-27, the male Long-tailed Duck was seen from the boat launch area along Hwy 37, straddling the MRN/SON county line (RLe, DN). Elsewhere, observers reported Snow and Ross's Geese; Tufted Ducks; Hooded, Red-breasted, and Common Mergansers; and both Eurasian and "Amerasian" Wigeons. But truly rare water birds were, well, rare.

## Raptors to Alcids

Raptor watchers submitted multiple reports of Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Golden Eagles, and Prairie Falcons. One of the season's first Swainson's Hawks was seen flying at China Camp SP (MRN), near San Pablo Bay, on Feb 27th (DN). and Birders at China Camp SP that day were also treated to calling Black Rails (DN). A Common Moorhen put in an appearance at Charleston Slough, SCL, on Feb 22nd (KD, KP). The sole Rock Sandpiper report this month was from Bodega Head, SON, where, on Feb. 8th, it joined a flock of Surfbirds and Turnstones on an offshore rock outcrop (LH). A couple Ruffs continued their sedentary ways at New Chicago

Marsh in Alviso, SCL, throughout the month (DWe, LG, WG)

Among the Laridae, Glaucous Gulls were the story for February. The month started with a "text-book" first-winter Glaucous Gull with the mixed gull flock on the mudflats at Corte Madera, MRN, on the 1st (WL). The South Bay produced several reports, including 3 at Alviso Marina and adjacent salt ponds on Feb 2nd and 10th (MRo, MM); at Almaden L, Feb 5-15 (Ann Verdi; mob); and at the Sunnyvale Water



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Pollution Control Plant on Feb 14th (JMy). On the coast, Glaucous Gulls were found frequenting the gull flocks at Venice Beach, Half Moon Bay (SM) on Feb 6th and 23rd (AE; RST) and at Año Nuevo SR on Feb 8th (PM). Back at Charleston Slough, Black Skimmers numbered 15 on Feb 22nd (KD, KP). Three Ancient Murrelets and a Marbled Murrelet represented the Alcids at Bodega Head on Feb 9th (DH).

## Doves to Thrashers

On Feb 5th, the Cunha Middle School Environment Club visited the Wavecrest

area of Half Moon Bay, SM, where it flushed a Short-eared Owl (Gary Deghi; mob). The pair of over-wintering Lewis's Woodpeckers continued at Alpine L, on the SM/SCL line, where they were reconfirmed on Feb 1st and 8th (KO, RST). On the 4th, a Lewis's Woodpecker made the tally on Canada Rd, SCL (BRe, FV). Sapsuckers added to the birding interest this month with the Tilden RP (CC) Yellow-bellied Sapsucker continuing at least through the 15th (mob) and a possible Red-naped Sapsucker, seen dodging across Hwy 12 near Sebastopol, SON, on the 20th (RS).

Coyote Cr Field Station, SCL, has been hosting a Hammond's Flycatcher this winter. Last reported flying free on the 9th, the bird was ensnared in the banding nets four times in January and again on Feb 4th (MM, MRo, BRe, FV). Several peregrinating Yellow-billed Magpies were reported last month. On Feb 14-28th, a Magpie was regular at the Nunes Ranch at PRNS, MRN (RM; mob). Magpies were new yard birds in Menlo Oaks, SM, on the 7th (BB), and in NAP, NAP, on the 24th (LS).

The Alum Rock (SCL) American Dipper was heard singing on Feb 7th (AE). On Feb 15th, a precocious Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen in the willows at Drake's Beach, PRNS, MRN (DR). Six days later, another Blue-gray entertained a Madrone Audubon birding group in Santa Rosa, SON (Ken Wilson). Back at Coyote Cr Field Station, an over-wintering Blue-gray was most recently recaptured on the 14th (MRo; LG, WG). According to AD, a docent at Año Nuevo SR reported a Mountain Bluebird in the vicinity the week of Feb 14th. Starting Feb 17th, a Townsend's Solitaire was a regular visitor to the berry-laden myrtle bushes at Hidden Villa, a private non-profit farm and educational center in Los Altos Hills, SCL (GH; mob).

## Wood Warblers to Finches

On Feb 18th, a Phainopepla wandered over to Sebastopol, SON, where it was discovered in the vicinity of Laguna de Santa Rosa (LH). At Arrowhead Marsh, ALA, a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow has become somewhat of a fixture during high tides, often accompanied by a Swamp Sparrow.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



It most recently revealed itself on the 21st (ASH, BP). Swamp. and White-throated Sparrows were reported with some regularity throughout the region. On Feb 27th, a Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) sent birders dashing to Clifton Court Forebay, an otherwise bleak locale in eastern CC (AS; mob). According to SG, this bird is just the 2nd CC record. On Feb 8th, a Black-headed Grosbeak showed up in a private yard in Corte Madera, MRN (NW). His rivals probably won't arrive for another 7 weeks.

In Livermore, ALA, an observer located a few Tricolor Blackbirds in the horse paddocks along El Charro Rd on Feb 16th (SH). On Feb 4th, a pair of Great-tailed Grackles turned up at the Riverside Golf Course, SCL (BRe, FV). Great-tailed Grackles appear to have established a colony at McNabney Marsh, CC, where up to 10 were ID'd the week of Feb 21st (PK, JR).

## Wood Warbler Sightings

### Nashville Warbler

2/26-28	Overfelt Gardens, SJ, SCL	KBI, DWe
2/8	Half Moon Bay, SM	RST
2/9	L. Merced, SF	PM

### Black-throated Gray Warbler

2/9	28th & Pacheco, SF	SR
2/15	L Merritt, Oakland, ALA	mob

### Hermit Warbler

2/1	Portola SP, SM	RST
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### Palm Warbler

2/21	Half Moon Bay, SM	GD
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### Black-and-white Warbler

2/1	Mountain L Park, SF	JH
2/1-5	L Merritt, Oakland, ALA	mob

### Northern Waterthrush

2/6-15	Charleston Marsh, SCL	LSt, BB, DB, JT
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**Abbreviations for Observers:** DA, David Armstrong; BB, Bill Bousman; DB, Dennis Braddy; KB, Ken Burton; KBI, Kim Blythe; PB, Patricia Braddy; HC, Hugh Cotter; JC, Josiah Clark; LC, Les Chibana; AD, Al DeMartini; GD, Gary Deghi; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; KD, Karen DeMello; AE, Al Eisner; MWE, Mark Eaton; BF, Brian Fitch; MF, Mike Feighner; RF, Rich Ferrick; RFi, RF, LG, Lois Goldfrank; SG, Steve Glover; WG, Wally Goldfrank; ASH, Alan Hopkins; DH, Denise Hamilton; GH, Garth Harwood; HH, Hazel H.; JH, Joe Hartog; KH, Keith Hansen; LH, Lisa Hug; SH, Steve Huckabone; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; EK, Emily Kearney; PK, Patrick King; CL, Cindy Lieurance; CDL, Calvin Lou; DL, Don Lewis; JL, John Luther; LL, Les Lieurance; RL, Robin Leong; RLe, Rick Lebaudour; WL, William Legge; DM, Dan Murphy; JM, Joe Morlan; JMy, Jean Myers; KM, Kevin McKereghan; MM, Mike Mammoser; PM, Peter Metropulos; RM, Richard Meriss; DN, Dan Nelson; KO, Kris Olson; BP, Bob Power; EP, Ed Pandolfino; JP, John Poole; KP, Kay Partelow; PP, Peter Pyle; BR, Bob Richmond; Bre, BRe; DR, Don Roberson; JR, Jean Richmond; MR, Mark Rauzon; MRo, Mike Rogers; SR, Siobhan Ruck; AS, Akira So; DS, David Suddjian; DSi, Dan Singer; ES, Emilie Strauss; ESe, Emily Serkin; LS, Linda Swanson; LSt, Lennie Stovel; PS, Paul Saraceni; RS, Rich Stallcup; RSc, Rusty Scalf; JT, Justin Teek; RST, Ron Thom; MU, Myra Ulvang; DVP, David Vander Pluym; FV, Frank Vanslager; AW, Alan Wight; AWi, Adam Winer; DW, Denise Wight; DWe, Dave Weber; DWi, Dave Wimpfheimer; NW, Nick Whelan; JY, James Yurchenco; MZ, Matt Zlatunich;

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; BBA, Breeding Bird Atlas; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; Cr, Creek; Cyn, Canyon; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L, Lake; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; N., N; NAP, Napa; Pt, Point; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; RP, Regional Park; Rd, Road; Res, Reservoir; RS, Regional Shoreline; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, SR

## FIELD TRIPS, continued from page 7

nual wildflower bonanza at Chimney Rock. Meet at the Bear Valley Visitor Center parking lot at 7:45 a.m. to carpool to the Lighthouse or at 8:45 at the Lighthouse parking lot. Bring comfortable walking shoes, layers, liquids, and lunch. Take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. West out of Corte Madera/Larkspur. Turn right in Olema at the flashing red light. Turn left in approx. 150 yds. onto Bear Valley Road. Turn left in approx. 1/4 mile to the Bear Valley Visitor Center. Park in large gravel lot opposite Visitor Center.



## Mitchell Canyon

Contra Costa County

Sunday, April 25

Leader: Bruce Mast, 510.435.1371 (no calls after 9 pm), Bmast@alumni.rice.edu

This is a delightful area with many songbirds and easy streamside walking. We'll look for migrating hummers, returning warblers and other neotropical migrants, and local residents. Meet at 8:30 a.m.

Take Hwy. 24 through Caldecott Tunnel. In Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Rd. exit. Go approx. 8 miles, then turn right onto Clayton Rd. After 1 mile, turn right on Mitchell Canyon Rd. and continue to the parking lot at the end of the road. Be prepared for mud and bring your lunch.

[\$]

## San Bruno Mountain

San Mateo County

Saturday, May 1

Leaders: Herb Brandt, 415.239.2711 and Doug Allshouse

Meet at 9 a.m. at the headquarters parking lot on Guadalupe Canyon Parkway for this half-day trip, which is a joint activity with the Friends of San Bruno Mountains. Expect to see birds migrating through as well as Bullock's Orioles, Western Tanager, flycatchers and Wrentits. Winter Wren is particularly abundant. [\$] if gate is open

## Black Diamond Mines Backpack and Birding Trip

Contra Costa County

Friday-Sunday, May 7-9

Leaders: Kathy and Blair Jarrett  
510.547.1233 (no calls after 9 pm),  
kathy\_jarrett@yahoo.com

In Spring, the hills around Black Diamond Mines are covered with wildflowers. Black Diamond supports a healthy wildlife population and over 100 species of birds, from the Golden Eagle to the Meadowlark. See [www.ebparks.org/parks/black.htm](http://www.ebparks.org/parks/black.htm).

Meet Friday, May 7 at 9 a.m. at the park entry parking area. We will bird near the park headquarters and the Somersville Townsite area. After lunch we will backpack to the Stewartville Backpack Camp (3.2 miles) and camp for two nights. Picnic tables and a pit toilet are available. Water must be filtered. Saturday, May 8, we will hike to bird and enjoy wildflowers. Sunday, May 9, we will bird before breakfast and then hike out to the trailhead.

Bring your own gear and food and \$12 for camping fees. Reservations are necessary. Trip limited to 12. Participants should have some experience backpacking. Hiking sticks advisable. Tents and rain gear required. Black Diamond is located south of Pittsburg and Antioch. Take Hwy. 4 to the Somersville Rd. exit in Antioch; drive south on Somersville Rd. to the Preserve entrance.

[\$]

## Yosemite's Bird Life

Yosemite National Park

Friday-Sunday, June 4-June 6

Leader: Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,  
davequady@worldnet.att.net and Bob Lewis  
See March Gull for details on this three day trip. Make your reservations early!

# BACKYARD BIRDER

Meg Pauletich



**A** H! The hills are alive with the sound of bird music! Well, SOME of it is musical. I've noticed the American Robin's sweet, plaintive song rising from trees below my deck. Every morning I awake to the territorial rollicking spring "tu-wit, tu-wit, tu-wit" of the Oak Titmouse. The White-breasted Nuthatch pair are in constant communication as they traverse down the chestnut tree to feed. The tin-horn toots of the Red-breasted Nuthatch announce his arrival at the peanut feeder. The continual arias of the House Finches proves that they are ready for spring. And my favorite, the Bewick's Wren, who belts out one tune after another with so much energy that I fear for him!

Occasionally, after all these years of observing, a new bird song catches my ear. One year I was surprised to see a California Towhee perched on the end of a high oak branch singing his little heart out. I must admit to finding these plain brown birds rather boring. They are nearly always on the ground and they slowly scuttle away when I come near to them. They are sweet and quite tame or maybe just phlegmatic. Plain brown with only a light throat and peachy or rusty tail coverts for color, they certainly blend in with the dirt in my garden. However, when this chap was singing a quite long song, ending with a trill, he was quite lovely.

I learned the name of the Oak Titmouse years ago when it was the Plain Titmouse so I was surprised to see the deliverer of a new and different trill was my old friend. His beak was wide open so there was no mistake. His scolding call always surprises me with its loudness. How can such a small bird have such a big voice?

The Red-shouldered Hawks are sending messages to all around them that it's time to pair up and build a nest. One handsome male perched on the tippy-top of our deodora cedar where he regaled all passersby with his piercing two-syllable cry, over and over again. I can hardly wait for the aerobatics of



Northern Flicker

courting to begin! The Red-tails should be competing for air time as well.

I'm lucky to have a number of woodpecker species at my feeders: Acorn, Downy, Hairy and Nuttall's. Northern Flickers abound in the trees and yard. The Acorn family is most greedy in winter and spring and win the prize for the noisiest. My grandson wanted to know what birds made that "annoying" sound. By far the most common woodpeckers in our neighborhood are the Nuttall's Woodpeckers, gobbling up suet, peanuts, and even other seeds. One day this spring, the male seemed to go berserk. He perched above his beloved suet feeder and began with the usual whinny, then his "rattle", and finally a sharp "pik". This last sound was repeated, one note at a time, over and over

for at least 3 minutes. If he didn't get the attention of all males, he certainly got my ear! I presume that he was warning off any interlopers. A female lurked near by so he grabbed her ears too. He has since repeated this performance many more times.

When I first moved to Orinda, I kept hearing a sound in the underbrush of a bird which seemed to be imitating an insect. A rather nasal, buzzy "chee-ee" was repeated as the bird moved along the ground. I remember the thrill of seeing this beautiful bird (certainly not a boring brown bird) as he moved furtively under the feeder, energetically scratching up bugs and seeds by bouncing back and forward on his two feet. I still count the Spotted Towhee among my favorites. It always looks like it's going to a fancy party.

Another behind-the-scenes type of bird is the Wrentit. It took me many months of lying in wait to see the bird I had been hearing. Its unmistakable bouncing ping pong ball song captured my imagination. Little did I know that Wrentits are very curious birds. If you sit very still and pish (the sound that birders make to attract birds' attention), you should be able to glimpse this plain but cunning little bird. In fact, you will probably see two of them since they are devoted mates. When I read that Wrentit families huddle together at night to keep warm, I fell in love with them. They will also defend their nest with dramatic free falls to the ground from branches in order to distract an intruder.

I could go on and on but it's time for me and for you to get out in your yard or take a hike and enjoy all this spring frivolity. And don't forget to listen!

Students from Laura Alvarez' 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade class, Melrose Elementary School, plant Marsh Grindelia (Gum Plant) along the banks of the slough at Elmhurst Creek, just before it enters the Arrowhead Marsh area at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park.

*The restoration is made possible by a grant from the Coastal Conservancy, in collaboration with the East Bay Regional Park District.*



Audre Newman

# How an Oakland Teacher Became a Bird Lover

**J**uan Benjumea, a 30-year teacher and curriculum developer in the Oakland Unified School District, had always been curious about birds but never really studied them. He only began learning seriously about birds four years ago when Golden Gate Audubon brought its environmental education program to his 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom at Lockwood Elementary School.

"This program has raised my level of awareness of the environment and created a love for birds," he says.

Now, since he lives near Arrowhead Marsh in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park, Juan visits the marsh once or twice a week and on weekends and spends time counting and photographing birds using a digital camera mounted to his scope.

Juan eagerly passes on his knowledge and passion for birds and wildlife to his students. Working with Golden Gate Audubon's MLK Education Program Director Amiko Mayeno and long-time Golden Gate Audubon volunteer Audre Newman, he introduces his class to the study of 16 migratory birds, including their patterns, habitats and songs, which he

downloaded from the Internet. In addition to the classroom curriculum, the Lockwood students go on three field trips to Arrowhead Marsh, where they identify and count the birds they've studied in class, measure the salinity of Bay water, and help restore and maintain the marsh.

"This program has definitely created conservation awareness in the kids," Juan says. "They have learned not to pollute by dropping their trash on the ground and, instead of throwing rocks, they have developed a respect for nature."

"In the classroom," Juan says, "I drill the students on identifying birds so they will know what they're seeing when we go to the marsh." As a result, he was thrilled when some adults at the marsh asked him, "How come those kids know so much about birds!"

Golden Gate Audubon's education program also includes a pen-pal relationship between Oakland elementary students and students in Sierra Gorda, Mexico, which is home to many Bay Area migratory bird species. Students exchange letters in Spanish describing their local environment and in-



Lockwood Elementary School Students help restore Arrowhead Marsh at Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline Park.

formation about their lives and families. As a Spanish-speaking native, Juan developed the curriculum for students in Sierra Gorda to learn about their native birds.

Recently, the young pen pals grew a little closer when Golden Gate Audubon volunteer and filmmaker Mick Erausquin came to Lockwood to videotape interviews with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Audre Newman then took the video to Sierra Gorda to show the students in Mexico their counterparts in Oakland.

by Marjorie Blackwell, Publications Chair

## ELECTION FOR GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WRITTEN BALLOT DUE MAY 13

The Nominating Committee of the Golden Gate Audubon Board of Directors is pleased to nominate the following candidates for the Board in the 2004 election, to be held by written ballot. There are six positions to be filled in this election. No other nominations were received. Golden Gate Audubon members in good standing may vote by completing and signing the ballot and returning it to the Golden Gate Audubon office by the deadline, May 13, 2004. Ballots received by May 13 will be counted in accordance with the choice specified for each candidate. Thirty-five ballots are needed to meet the quorum requirement of the Golden Gate Audubon Bylaws.

DIRECTOR NOMINEE	TERM ENDING	YES	NO	
Miles McKey	2005	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anne McTavish	2006	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MEMBER'S SIGNATURE
Jacqui Smalley	2006	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marjorie Blackwell	2007	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MEMBER'S PRINTED NAME
Autumn Garrett	2007	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mail to:
Al Peters	2007	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702

WATERSHED, continued from page 1

The SFPUC is currently developing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for its Alameda watershed lands. The HCP is a process developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that identifies the potential effects of development projects on species listed as rare, threatened, or endangered by federal and state agencies. Using this information, the agencies, the project applicant (in this case, the SFPUC), and the public seek solutions that reduce the impact on habitat and wildlife.

Key questions for the SFPUC are: Can new roads be sited to avoid harming listed species? Can bridges be moved to locations more favorable to wildlife? Can roads and bridges be repaired only when listed species are not present? Can water releases and volumes be adjusted to help fish populations?

A major unresolved issue is whether the reconstruction of Calaveras Dam should be part of the HCP. The dam is seismically at risk, and the SFPUC intends to rebuild or enlarge it. Such an extensive project should

be part of the HCP so that environmental impacts and mitigations can be examined in a larger ecological framework. The SFPUC, however, is proposing to exclude Calaveras Dam from the HCP. The public will have an opportunity to comment on this issue and also to participate in the creation of the overall HCP. Various stages of the HCP will be presented at a series of meetings where the public will be invited to offer feedback.

How You Can Help

Inclusion of the Calaveras Dam is a critical element in the Habitat Conservation Plan for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's Alameda County watershed lands. Please write the SFPUC and ask that the dam be part of the HCP. Address your comments to Alameda HCP, Land and Resources Management Section, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, 1657 Rollins Road, Burlingame, CA 94010-2310.

By Arthur Feinstein  
Conservation/Education Director

BIRD KILL, continued from page 1

environmental review, issue shorter-term permits that would allow the placement and design of wind turbines to respond to emerging science about reducing bird kill, and require that the most lethal turbines be shut down.

How You Can Help

Letters are needed before and after the appeal is heard on April 1. Please write to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and request that the County:

- Undertake an environmental review, as required by CEQA, before granting any permits for wind turbines at Altamont;
- Not issue any indefinite or 20-year permits for wind turbines;
- Include requirements in any permits issued that mandate the reduction of bird kills.

Send your letters to: Alameda County Board of Supervisors, 1221 Oak St. #536, Oakland CA, 94612. For further information, contact Arthur Feinstein.

WELCOME  
NEW  
MEMBERS!

*The GULL* is the official newsletter of Golden Gate Audubon Society. As a supporting member of Golden Gate Audubon, you receive a subscription to *The GULL*, a 10 percent discount on all items purchased at our nature store, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Local members of the National Audubon Society automatically receive *The GULL*. Not a member yet? Contact our office at 510.843.2222 for details.

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